

**CLAIM LISTING**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1 through 10 (Canceled).

11. (Currently amended) A tampon applicator assembly comprising:

a barrel having a first end and a second end opposite said first end, said barrel having a tubular shape and a longitudinal axis that is substantially straight, said barrel having an insertion tip at said first end, a fingergrip proximal to said second end, and a tapered main section adjacent said insertion tip and said finger grip,

said tapered main section having a maximum outer diameter located adjacent to said finger grip and a first wall taper that decreases in diameter from said finger grip to said insertion tip, said first wall taper having a taper ratio of about 1.07 to about 1.15,

said insertion tip having a second wall taper that decreases from said tapered main section to a distal end of the insertion tip,

said finger grip having a shoulder region adjacent to said tapered main section, a gripping region adjacent to said shoulder region, and a flared region adjacent to said gripping region opposite said shoulder region, wherein said shoulder region decreases in diameter from said tapered main section to said gripping region, and wherein said flared region has an outer diameter that continuously increases from said gripping region to said second end of said barrel;

a plunger being slidably received in said barrel; and

a pledget being disposed in said barrel so that a force applied on said plunger expels said pledget from said barrel at said insertion end.

12. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said maximum outer diameter is located from said insertion tip about 55% to 85% of an overall length of said barrel.

13. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 12, wherein said

maximum outer diameter is located from said insertion tip about 60% to 75% of said overall length of said barrel.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said first wall taper has said taper ratio that is about 1.08 to about 1.13.

16. (Original) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said insertion tip further comprises a plurality of petals.

17. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said second wall taper has a taper ratio of between about 0.66 and about 1.6.

18. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said second wall taper has a taper ratio is between about 0.7 and about 0.9.

19. (Original) The assembly as in claim 16, wherein said plurality of petals have a petal length-to-width ratio of about 0.8 to about 3.

20. (Original) The assembly as in claim 19, wherein said petal length-to-width ratio is over about 2.

Claims 21 through 24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said shoulder and flared regions each have an outer diameter that is about 10% to about 30% larger than an outer diameter of said gripping region.

Claims 26 through 30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 11, wherein said insertion tip

has a plurality of petals and said second wall taper has a taper ratio of more than about 0.66.

Claims 32 and 36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 11, wherein said insertion tip has a plurality of petals, and wherein said plurality of petals have a petal length-to-width ratio over about 2 to about 3.

Claims 38 through 43. (Canceled)

44. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said tapered main section is tapered linearly from said maximum outer diameter to said insertion tip.

45. (Canceled)

46. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said plunger has a plunger main body between a plunger first end and a plunger second end, and wherein said first end has a first outer diameter that is larger than a main outer diameter of said main body.

47. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 46, wherein said second end has a gradual enlargement or taper from said main body that is greater than said main outer diameter.

48. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said plunger has a plunger main body portion between a plunger first end and a plunger second end, and wherein said plunger main body portion has a plunger main body diameter that is less than said diameter of said gripping region so that said plunger main body portion is movable through said gripping region to expel said pledget from said barrel.

49. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said flared

region has an outer diameter that is about 15% larger than said diameter of said gripping region.

50. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said flared region has an outer diameter that is about 25% larger than said diameter of said gripping region.

51. (Canceled)